The Iowa County

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December 2006

Iowa State Association of Counties
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**ISAC’s Mission:**
To promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

**ISAC’s Vision:**
To be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.
Iowa's County Jails

Iowa Code chapter 356, entitled “Jails and Municipal Holding Facilities,” defines the requirements for the operation of county jails and temporary holding facilities in Iowa. For this article I will limit this discussion to county jails. The information in this article is obtained from county sheriffs and jail administrators as required by Iowa Code and the Iowa Administrative Code.

Capacity in Iowa

Currently 97 counties are operating a county jail. A fiscal year report on county jails, prepared by the Iowa Department of Corrections for FY06, shows the rated capacity of county jails in Iowa at 5,327 prisoners and the average statewide daily prisoner count at 3,851. These numbers indicate that on any given day there are 1,476 empty jail beds in the state. Some clarification is needed here to bring these numbers into perspective. Of the 5,327 capacity, 674 are classified as a temporary holding capacity. Temporary holding cells can hold prisoners for periods of time less than 24-hours. This leaves a rated capacity of 4,653, commonly referred to as general population.

Inspection reports, prepared by the Iowa Department of Corrections, show a common factor affecting the capacity of many Iowa jails: difficulty in separating and classifying prisoners as required by Iowa Code and by Administrative Rule. This includes separation of females from males and juveniles from adults, and separation of prisoners who may be violent, have a contagious disease, or from whom sexually deviant behavior can be reasonably anticipated. These separation requirements can result in the loss of available bed space as one prisoner may take up a cell area originally designed to hold several prisoners.

The average daily population number does not include prisoners housed outside the state of Iowa by several counties, including Polk, Scott and Clinton, or prisoners under the custody of the sheriff who may be in some type of court ordered release program, such as electronic monitoring or temporarily being held in some type of treatment or evaluation facility. The monthly report from the counties for June 2006 shows that 36 counties had at least one prisoner during the month outside the jail. Statistics show nine counties consistently housing numbers of prisoners in excess of their rated capacities.

Increasing Population Counts

Iowa Department of Corrections records show a history of increasing prisoner counts. Population statistics 10 years ago show an average daily population of 2,228. Today’s number, 3,851, is an increase of 1,623 prisoners held in county jails per day. A small part of this increase in daily average prisoner count is an effort by some counties to generate revenue by holding federal prisoners for the U.S. Marshal’s Service and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, and several counties along the northern border of Iowa holding prisoners for Minnesota counties. More recent jail population statistics, FY00 to FY06, show an increase in the number of prisoners processed into the jails. Total prisoners processed into the jails increased from 131,246 in FY00 to 150,042 in FY06. The statistics also show an increase of females and juveniles being processed into county jails. Between 2000 and 2006 the females processed rose from 23,733 to 31,416 and juveniles, both male and female, rose from 543 to 796.

In an effort to deal with rising prisoner counts, many counties have had to increase capacity. It is the responsibility of the Jail Inspection Unit of the Department of Corrections to review new jail construction and remodeling projects to determine compliance with the jail standards. The Department’s records show that since 2000, 27 counties have constructed new jails and 27 counties, including a few of the newly constructed jails, have remodeled or converted an existing building into prisoner housing. Many of the remodeling projects to increase capacity came following recent changes to Iowa Jail Standards. These changes reduced the previous square footage and fixture requirements for prisoners in Iowa jails. This new construction and remodeling has increased the rated capacity of Iowa jails by approximately 1,887 beds in the last six years. In addition, seven counties, (Polk, Scott, Marion, Crawford, Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo and Washington) have new construction underway that will increase capacities. Woodbury County is completing a major remodeling project in an effort to deal with over-capacity conditions. Some of this new construction came about simply to replace a jail that had outlived its usefulness and repair or maintenance of the building was not economical. However, several counties continue to operate jails in buildings that are in excess of 100 years old.

The new construction from 2000 to 2006 followed a period of construction and remodeling during the mid 1980’s and 1990’s that involved at least 20 counties. These new construction projects have been designed to address anticipated future increases in the jail prisoner populations. Currently the capacities of jails in the state range from six prisoners to 577. The latter will increase dramatically when the new 1,500-bed Polk County Jail is completed.

Why the Increase?

Is there a reason for the continued increase in prisoner population in Iowa’s jails? This question can best be answered by your county sheriff, as factors effecting prisoner populations may vary from one county to another and from month to month. However, discussions with sheriffs and jail administrators, during inspections indicate several factors that are in-
fluencing jail populations’ including mandated sentencing penalties for some criminal violations and an increased effectiveness of law enforcement, particularly in the areas of drug enforcement, domestic violence and sexual abuse. There are still some of us who can remember when each town had its own little jail and the county jail was also the residence of the sheriff. Times have changed!

**Jail Requirements**

The Iowa Code states that the county jails shall be in the charge of the respective sheriff and that the sheriff shall have charge and custody of the prisoners in the jail and shall receive those lawfully committed and keep them until discharged by law. The jails in the state shall be used for the detention of persons charged with an offense, for the detention of persons who may be committed to secure their attendance as witnesses on the trial of a criminal case, for the confinement of persons under sentence, for the confinement of persons subject to imprisonment under the ordinances of a city, and for detaining persons committed by authority of courts of the United States as well as any state.

Iowa Code §356.36 outlines the establishment of “Jail Standards.” The Iowa Department of Corrections, in consultation with the Iowa State Sheriffs and Deputies Association, the Iowa Associations of Chiefs of Police and Peace Officers, the Iowa League of Cities and the Iowa State Association of County Supervisors, shall develop minimum standards for the regulation of jails. When completed by the Department, the standards shall be adopted as rules pursuant to Chapter 17A (Iowa Administrative Code). The first Iowa Jail Standards were established in the early 1980’s in an effort to reduce county liability for jail operations.

Iowa Code §356.43 requires the Iowa Department of Corrections to conduct periodic inspections of each jail and officially notify the governing body of the political subdivision in writing to comply fully with §356.36. The Iowa Administrative Code requires the Department of Corrections to conduct annual inspections of county jails.

In addition, Iowa Code §356.43 requires a county sheriff to file, on a monthly basis, a written report with the Department of Corrections. The report shall include, but not be restricted to, the total number of men, women, and juveniles held in the jail for the reporting month.

Mike Richardson was appointed Chief Jail Inspector for the Iowa Department of Corrections in July 2006. Prior to being appointed as Chief Jail Inspector, Mike Richardson was Tama County Sheriff for 16 years and a Deputy Sheriff for 12 years, during which he served on the Board of Directors, Legislative Committee and Jails Committee for the Iowa State Sheriffs and Deputies Association.

**Iowa Jail Trends**

- Rated capacity of county jails in Iowa - 5,327 prisoners
- Average state wide daily prisoner count - 3,851
- Total prisoners processed into the jails in FY06 - 150,042
- Female prisoners in FY06 - 31,416
- Juvenile prisoners in FY06 - 796
- New construction and remodeling has increased the rated capacity of Iowa jails by approximately 1,887 beds in the last six years.
- 97 counties are operating a county jail.
- Capacity of jails - 6 to 577 prisoners
- Capacity of new Polk County Jail (when completed) - 1,500 prisoners
- Seven counties, (Polk, Scott, Marion, Crawford, Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo and Washington) have new construction underway.
- Several counties continue to operate jails in buildings that are in excess of 100 years old.
Election Day Results

Everyone has heard the old line, “You’d better be careful what you ask for because you just may get it.” Now that Democrats hold majorities in both houses, could this be the case for the incoming legislative leadership? Hardly! The whole purpose of political parties is to win elections. With the newfound power, however, come new responsibilities.

In the Iowa General Assembly, Democrats have been in the minority for many years. Except for sharing control with Republicans during the last two years, it has been since 1996 that the Democrats held the majority in the Senate. In the House of Representatives, Democrats haven’t seen majority numbers since 1992. Joining Democratic legislative leaders in January will be our new Governor-Elect Chet Culver, also a Democrat. Some are calling this statehouse sweep a “trifecta.” The year 1965 was the last time the Democrats held majorities in both houses and the governorship.

When in the minority, there is often less pressure in making legislative decisions. Those in the minority don’t have to bear the responsibility for controversial policy directions or program budget cuts. Minority members can point to majority members as those who are responsible for all that is bad. As one legislative staffer said, “For years we spent our time figuring out how to thwart things but now we will be far more busy initiating legislation.”

Political Power

Majority numbers are power and legislators respect power. Political power is typically derived in two ways. First is money. Individuals and interest groups that want to support elected officials make contributions to campaign funds. Groups of individuals with common interests often organize political action committees (PACs) for the purpose of making political donations. PACs analyze candidate platforms and give them money when a platform reflects the PAC’s views on selected issues. Candidates use these contributions to finance their campaigns. If the candidate wins, then contributors will have greater access to that lawmaker.

The second source of political power is people. “People” translate into votes. Most county officials are elected by the people. As a group, county officials don’t have PACs but they do have their fingers on the political pulse. Unlike legislators and members of Congress, local officials stay back home year-round among those who elected them. On a daily basis, he or she encounters constituents at the grocery store, in the local diner, at school or church functions, and other neighborhood events. Meanwhile, lawmakers spend significant periods of time away from the local folks as they are busy in Des Moines or Washington, D.C. Accordingly, it is important for legislators and members of Congress to listen to their local officials. This helps them stay connected to the people.

The Local Voice

When county officials exercise a collective voice, they exercise power. In order to be most effective on matters important to Iowa citizens, local officials must relate their concerns to state legislators and the governor. The same people who elect legislators and the governor also elect local officials.

As the representative of Iowa’s 99 counties, ISAC designs various strategies to help county officials communicate a uniform message to state lawmakers. ISAC’s coordination with affiliate legislative liaisons helps to assure policy successes in specific areas of interest to each affiliate. Weekly ISAC Updates and the Iowa County magazine provide alerts to county officials about key legislative issues that come before the House and Senate. Various ISAC programs bring county officials to the Capitol for interaction with lawmakers.

All of these efforts facilitate the political voice of local officials. The more county officials participate in these efforts, the stronger county government will be. While ISAC works with lawmakers on numerous issues, hearing from the folks back home carries the most weight with state representatives and senators. In effect, county officials are the strongest lobbyists.

Power in and of itself should not be the goal. When power alone is the goal, it degenerates into an abuse of power. When respectfully exercised, power is the means to success. The new majority should use their power to work on those issues that they believe have been neglected. Issues such as property tax reform or mental health funding are prime examples of problems that have needed attention for many years. Congratulations to the winners of the 2006 elections. Now that Election Day is over, it is time to leave politics behind and exercise statesmanship. County officials stand ready to work with the 82nd General Assembly and Governor-Elect Culver to serve Iowa’s citizens. After all, isn’t that what they asked for?
28E Agreements
Used by Counties for More than 40 Years

When multiple local governments are providing the same service, it often makes sense for them to collaborate. This is especially true in situations where there are high overhead or operating costs, such as landfills, ambulances or transit services.

Iowa Code chapter 28E promotes this type of collaboration. It was adopted in 1965. City and county officials use so-called 28E agreements to spell out the details of the collaboration. It is even possible for a 28E agreement to create a separate unit of government, called a 28E entity, with its own governmental structure, in order to provide a needed service.

Chapter 28E was enacted before either cities or counties had home rule. And at that time there was no broad authorization for governments to enter into sharing agreements. So the adoption of Chapter 28E provided counties with a great expansion of their authority for intergovernmental cooperation.

According to Iowa Code §28E.2, a county may exercise its powers jointly with other governments, private individuals or businesses. There are two ways this can be done: 1) by a joint agreement by participating parties; or 2) creating a separate entity to carry out the purpose of the agreement.

The first 28E agreement was in November 1965, when Palo Alto County and the city of Emmetsburg entered into an agreement to improve a jointly owned road. In terms of numbers, chapter 28E has been an unqualified success. There are now 14,716 28E agreements on file in the Secretary of State’s office - 5,600 involving counties. All 99 counties have at least one 28E agreement.

The filing of 28E agreements grew steadily between 1965 and 2002, and has been dropping ever since. Kurt Thurmeier, who was a professor at Iowa State, studied 28E agreements and put together a report in 2005. He studied 28E agreements in Iowa between 1965 and 2003. He found that the biggest area of 28E agreements was “community and neighborhood services,” which includes housing, health care, libraries and economic development agreements. The second largest group was law enforcement. The third largest group was highway and public works. Together those three accounted for 72% of the agreements on file.

Thurmaier also found that government officials were happy with their 28E agreements. About 70% believed that the 28E agreement had improved service effectiveness or efficiency.

One thing about 28E agreements that sometimes gets overlooked is Iowa Code §28E.4, which requires that a board of supervisors take “appropriate action by ordinance, resolution or otherwise,” before any county-related 28E agreement is valid. So a sheriff cannot enter into a valid 28E agreement without the approval of the board of supervisors.

One advantage of using a 28E agreement is that individual counties are not liable for the debts of the 28E entity. Allis-
Responding to Children

I attended the Mid-Iowa Family Therapy Clinic, Inc. 2nd Annual Statewide Advocacy Training in June. Charlie Appelstein, MSW, spoke on “Responding vs. Reacting to Your Kids: Key Principles and Techniques for Effective Parenting.” Appelstein has spent his entire career working with children and youth with special needs and is a nationally known speaker and trainer. His humor and strength-based approach is very effective and uplifting to parents, child care providers and case managers. The training provided concrete approaches and techniques in managing responses to behavior, communicating with children and youth, building self-esteem and helping them to manage their own behavior.

Strength-Based Approach

It is essential that children’s strengths - and not their deficits - are the focus in order to have good self-esteem and hope for the future. According to Appelstein, life isn’t what you see, it’s what you perceive. Children that think they can achieve have others in their lives that believe in them and are able to overcome great obstacles to reach their goals. A parent that utilizes a strength-based approach will perceive the child behaviors in a positive versus a negative light. For example, they see the child as good at getting their needs met, rather than being manipulative; good at standing up for themselves, rather than being stubborn or defiant. Instead of seeing a child as having a tantrum, fit or outburst, they are searching for the message the child is trying to communicate. One parent could perceive a child’s behavior as just being lazy or not caring, while another parent could identify the behavior as their ability to prevent further hurts or failures from occurring. A parent, caregiver or case manager who sees through strength-based glasses will not take the behavior of the child personally and will respond, rather than react, to them.

Reaction techniques are statements like “because I told you so”, “because I’m the parent” or “because that is the rule.” Other reactive techniques include yelling, spanking and making unilateral decisions. Parents or caregivers that feel incompetent and lack support often react to the statements or behaviors of children. In order to change, they need to increase their self management skills and support from family, friends and the community they live in. Appelstein stated that lack of support causes punitive actions and the better the parent or caregiver takes care of him or herself, the better it is for the kids in their lives.

The Golden Rule

Appelstein describes responding to children as applying the golden rule in your interactions with children and youth. If you are responding to children as you would like to be treated, then you are responding to them. The most used tool is the old counting to 10 to give you time to review what just took place, what you are feeling and how you will respond. Appelstein suggests giving kids reasons why when they ask. Parents and caregivers can provide children with a greater sense of control by informing them of upcoming events or transitions to prepare them for changes. Kids should be empowered to solve their own problems, and decide with their parents and caregivers the consequences for their behaviors.

What I most liked about the session was the use of cues, humor and music to help children and youth manage their own stress and behaviors. The tendencies, habits or compulsions that are problematic are identified in the cues and rhythm is added, with either bongos or drums. Cues work best when they rhyme and are repeated often. This helps children understand that their behavior is not internal, and that they can have control over it. Cues can be individualized for each child. Appelstein sells CD’s with cues that he has recorded for kids to use, and listening to them really helped me to understand how powerful they could be for children. Here are some examples of written cues:

• A kid who needs to do things perfectly - “Get lost Mrs. Perfecto! Get out of here. Get off my back, you loser!”
• A kid who is prone to behavior outbursts - “Get out of here Mr. Fitz!”
• A kid who talks rudely - “Get lost Rudy! You’re nothing!”
• A kid who argues incessantly - “Go far Mr. R! You’re through Mr. R Gue!”
• A kid who is reluctant to write - “Get out of town, Mr. No Write!”

Appelstein’s book, No Such Thing As a Bad Kid, expands on the objectives of the training and provides examples of a variety of interventions and limit-setting techniques in response to challenging behaviors of troubled children and youth. For more information on Appelstein and his trainings and available resources, go to www.charliea.com.
Re-inventing the ETC

In 2003, 67 counties signed a 28E agreement that allowed the development of the Electronic Transactions Clearinghouse (ETC). The purpose of the ETC was to allow member counties to become compliant with the new HIPAA standards that were to become effective in October 2003.

These standards stated that if a provider presented an electronic invoice or claim to a payer (the county), the county must have a mechanism in place to receive and acknowledge the invoice or claim. The entire process must be done to HIPAA standards. Any county refusing these claims or not meeting HIPAA standards could face fines.

To be a member, each county paid a one time fee of $2,500 that was used to develop the clearinghouse. In addition, to cover operating expenses, each county was to pay an annual fee based on its proportional share of a three-year average of the combined total of all member counties’ actual GAAP general fund expenditures and mental health fund expenditures. This “annual” fee was only collected once in 2003 and has not been assessed since.

So as of October 2003, members of the ETC could state that they were compliant. It was soon discovered that the providers weren’t ready to submit claims in the HIPAA format and wouldn’t be in position to consider submitting claims until late 2005. For a couple years, it worked well for the providers who had older systems to continue to provide files in the formats that larger counties could read into their system. If neither party complained, then the life was good.

In early 2006, Broadlawns Hospital in Polk County decided to replace its aging accounting system. Because Broadlawns was no longer going to support non-HIPAA formats, counties that dealt with Broadlawns needed to be in a position to begin receiving HIPAA formatted files.

At about the same time, ISAC began to review the ETC as to its overall functionality. While the system potentially worked well as a method to receive and process claims, it lacked the ability to link to counties that already invested money in a claims adjudication system. We approached the review of the ETC with the intent that we wanted it to operate as if it was a for-profit clearinghouse. What were some of the services and products offered to its clients? What were the relationships with providers and payers? Who paid for the transactions? How do we incorporate providers that don’t bill electronically?

To operate as a clearinghouse, two things were clear. First, we need more control over the technical knowledge associated with the ETC and a better understanding of the HIPAA processes itself. Much of this knowledge today resides with a third-party provider. Learning how the ETC operates and the technology associated with it would allow member counties to expand the use of the ETC beyond just moving transactions. Second, it was clear that for-profit clearinghouses were taking HIPAA transactions from providers and moving them to be consumed by a payer’s existing system. In its current form, the ETC could receive claims, but it forced the counties with a claims processing system in place to work the claim within the ETC. Linking to older (legacy) systems would allow the county or counties to NOT throw out their systems, but to use the ETC to help extend the life cycle of the systems.

ETC Migration and Enhancement Project

After several months of review, the ISAC Board at its October meeting approved the ETC Migration and Enhancement Project. Tactically, the project is made up of two parts: 1) moving the ETC server in-house to ISAC’s location; and 2) linking the ETC to legacy systems. The server move and testing were to be completed by November 22nd. The links should be completed and tested by December 19th, with the intent of going live on January 1, 2007.

Moving the ETC in house will allow the ISAC staff and technical support to begin understanding the ETC and the BizTalk technology. BizTalk is the engine for the ETC. It enables entities to automate and optimize business processes by its ability to tie different applications together. A better understanding of this technology will assist our members as we seek to leverage one technology against another.

Initially, the linking capability will assist the growth of the ETC by bringing volume into the system. In the long term the linking capability will assist us by not only linking other legacy systems, but by reporting on the information in the ETC.

Once we complete the migration and enhancements, the next challenge will be to make the ETC more functional for the smaller counties. If we can add the ability for small providers to log in and electronically build and send an invoice, the smaller counties could electronically adjudicate the claim. Once this information is captured, standardized reports could be developed for the required state and federal reporting information.

By: Robin Harlow
ISAC Technology Project Manager

The 2006 Fall School recap will be in the January issue of The Iowa County.

Thanks to all of the attendees, presenters, sponsors, advertisers and exhibitors!
by the numbers

Iowa’s Inmates

By: Jay Syverson
ISAC Fiscal Analyst

What better way to kick off this holiday season than with a discussion of Iowa’s state prisoners? See the details below, but it really comes down to this: if you want to stay out of prison, then get married and go to college, but not necessarily in that order. Oh, it also helps if you’re female, over age 80 and a Hindu.

As of June 30, 2006, Iowa’s prisons held 8,656 inmates. Most of the inmates, 92%, are male. In contrast, males make up just 49% of Iowa’s general population. But Iowa women aren’t all sugar and spice: there are about 7,700 female offenders being supervised in the community. That group also includes 23,000 males, so the total number of offenders in Iowa (either in prison or being supervised in the community) is about 39,200 - 8,400 females and 30,800 males.

There are 17 inmates ages 9-17 and seven inmates ages 81 and older. The age range accounting for the greatest share of prisoners is ages 21-30, which contains over 3,100 (36%) of the prisoners. The median age of prisoners is 34; the median age of Iowa’s general population is 38.6.

Most prisoners (58%) are single, never married, while just 21% of prisoners are currently married. Those percentages are just about reversed for the general population (over age 15): 25% of Iowans are single, never married, and 58% are currently married. Seventeen percent of prisoners are divorced, compared to 10% of the general population.

Almost all Iowa prisoners who identified their religion describe themselves as Christian (62%). Two percent describe themselves as Muslim. Less than 1% of prisoners describe themselves as Jewish, Buddhist, Native American or Pagan. There are only two prisoners that practice Hinduism, which, on a completely unrelated note, is generally regarded as the world’s oldest organized religion (isn’t that interesting?). Over 3,000 prisoners (35%) chose not to identify their religion.

About 69% of inmates have a high school diploma or equivalent; 19% have less than a high school education; 6% have a technical/vocational school degree; and 1.4% have attained some other level of post-secondary education, including 19 inmates with a doctoral degree. In Iowa’s general population (this data includes only people ages 25 and over, which ignores a fair number of prisoners; so it’s not a truly valid comparison, but it’s the best available) 36% of people have a high school diploma or equivalent; 10% have less than a high school education; 9% have an associate’s degree; 21% have some college but no degree; and 24% have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Sources: Iowa DOC, State Data Center of Iowa

health check

Are You Drinking Too Much?

By: Sandy Longfellow
ISAC Administrative Assistant

When I was a child, there were times when I associated drinking with erratic driving, arguments and violent behavior. I saw that once people started drinking they wouldn’t quit until someone made them or they ran out of money. I think it is important for all of us to think about “Am I drinking too much?” Here are some important questions to consider:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won’t?
- Do you ever forget what you did while you were drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after you have been drinking?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have a drinking problem. If you have any conditions that are affected by drinking, you should consider abstaining altogether. Your doctor can advise you if this is the case. Here are some steps that can help you if you need to cut down:

- **Watch it at home** – Don’t keep temptations around.
- **Drink slowly** – When you drink, sip your drink slowly.
- **Take a break from alcohol** – Pick a day or two each week when you won’t drink at all.
- **Learn how to say NO** – Practice ways to say no politely.
- **Stay active** – Use the time and money spent on drinking to do something fun with your family or friends.
- **Get support** – Ask your family and friends for support to help you reach your goal.
- **Watch out for temptations** – Plan ahead of time what you will do to avoid drinking when you are tempted.
- **Do not drink when you are angry** or upset or have a bad day!
- **Do not give up!** Most people do not cut down or give up drinking all at once. Remember to get support from people who care about you and want to help.

No matter what, please make plans when you do drink to get alternate transportation and don’t drive. Take a cab, ask a friend or have a designated driver. You can read one of many stories about the impact on the families left behind by visiting these websites: [www.madd.org/victims/2462](http://www.madd.org/victims/2462) and [www.madd.org/victims/2455](http://www.madd.org/victims/2455).

*Note: The data in the “By the Numbers” column refers to state prisoners, not county inmates.*
ISAC Spring School 2007

By: Jerri Noboa
ISAC Meetings Administrator

Registration will be available December 11 for ISAC’s Spring School March 18-20, 2007, at the Marriott and Renaissance Savery in downtown Des Moines. The good news about this conference is the renovation at the Marriott will be done and this will be our last Sunday - Tuesday format. Visit ISAC’s website (www.iowacounties.org) to register and view conference information.

Spring School Agenda

Sunday, March 18
1pm - 3pm Committee Meetings
2pm - 5pm ISAC Registration (Marriott Exhibit Area)
2pm - 5pm Exhibitors Set-Up
3pm - 5pm ISAC Seminars (Marriott)
5pm - 6:30pm Exhibitors Reception (Marriott Exhibit Area)

Monday, March 19
7:30am - 4pm ISAC Registration (Marriott Exhibit Area)
7:30am - 9am Coffee & Rolls with Exhibitors (Marriott Exhibit Area)
9am - 11am General Session (Marriott, 2nd floor)
11:15am - 5pm Affiliate Time
11:15am - 12:45pm CCMS Luncheon
2:30pm - 3pm Break & Vendors Drawing (Marriott Exhibit Area)
3pm Exhibitors Tear-Down
5:30pm - 8pm Hospitality Rooms
6pm - 8pm ISAC Board Dinner
8pm - 9pm Legislative Reception (Renaissance Savery)
9pm - Midnight ISAC Dance (Renaissance Savery)

Tuesday, March 20
8am - Noon ISAC Registration (Marriott, 2nd floor)
8am - 4pm Affiliate Time

Lodging

You can make your hotel reservations starting December 5. Marriott (515-244-5500) rates are $73/flat for single or double. You need a credit card to hold the reservation. If you do not want to pay for the room on your personal credit card, you need to call the accounting department and tell them you are going to bring a check with you and request that they send you a document stating the room rate, hotel/motel tax, etc. Then have the check cut to take with you. Present the check when you check-in. This must be done before each school.

Renaissance Savery (515-244-2151) rates are $73/flat for single or double. You may opt to send in a claim form with a letter (on county letterhead) asking to have the room billed back to the county. This must be done before arrival date and for each school. The letter of request can be faxed to Carla Curvy at 515-243-8974.

Hotel Fort Des Moines (515-243-1161 or 800-532-1466 and use booking #834566) rates are $73/flat for single or double and $93/suites. You need a credit card to hold the reservation or they will accept purchase orders/claim forms, but this must be done before arrival and for each school.

New County Officers School

On Wednesday, January 17, ISAC will host its New County Officers (NCO) School at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines. This event is organized specifically to provide newly-elected county officials with the baseline information they need to begin their job. While the NCO School is presented for new county officials, it is also an excellent opportunity for incumbent county officials to brush up on some important subjects. Then on Thursday, January 18, several ISAC affiliates will be putting on a full day of individualized training. The full agenda and sessions are listed on ISAC’s website (www.iowacounties.org), along with online registration.

Registration for the two-day NCO school is $100 in advance, $120 at the door. A one-day registration fee of $50 in advance and $60 at the door is also available. Register today!
**Sheriff Receives Award for Bravery**

Mitchell County Sheriff Curt Younker was honored with the Sullivan Brothers Award of Valor by Gov. Tom Vilsack. Sheriff Younker and four other men rescued a pilot after his crop duster crashed in Osage last year - August 5, 2005. “His bravery was unprecedented,” Vilsack said. “A plane that’s on fire, a pilot who is in deep trouble, and he risks his life knowing that there’s fuel on the wing - it’s just a matter of time before the plane goes up in smoke.” Younker has served as sheriff for 22 years and before that deputy for 20 years. The Sullivan Brothers Award of Valor is presented each year to law enforcement officers and firefighters who distinguish themselves with heroic acts. *(Taken from the Globe Gazette, October 3)*

**Mental Health Treatment in Jails**

Johnson County started a pilot program in July for mental health jail alternatives as a solution to a failed 2000 bond issue for a new jail. In September the program became permanent. In addition to a medical evaluation, jail staff fills out mental health evaluations for prisoners during the intake process. The program works by identifying inmates who need mental health treatment and then providing treatment on whatever level is necessary. Linn County has a similar program. A total of 178 of the 28,419 people at the Linn County Jail have received treatment over the past two years. In Johnson County 107 of the 6,766 people booked into the county jail have received some form of treatment since July. The goal is to find what triggers lawbreaking in the inmates. “In the long run it saves money to identify people with mental illnesses and do something about it,” said Linn County Sheriff Don Zeller. *(Taken from the Cedar Rapids Gazette, October 5)*

**Land Use Inventory**

A regional land use inventory to help six eastern Iowa counties plan for future growth is currently under way with the assistance of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) diagnostics program at Iowa State University. The inventory is a cooperative venture between the ISU Extension GIS diagnostics program, the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG), county governments in Linn and Johnson counties, and the Johnson/Linn County Public Leadership Group.

Mônica A. Haddad, an assistant professor of Community and Regional Planning at ISU who directs the GIS diagnostics program, said the inventory will provide spatial evidence of how land cover has changed over the past decade in Benton, Linn, Jones, Iowa, Johnson and Washington counties. She said the completed inventory should provide a better understanding of what areas in the region need more attention in future land use planning, as well as good information on the areas that are growing. The region includes the major population centers of Cedar Rapids and Iowa City.

The analysis covers 66 incorporated communities in the six counties. Factors that will be studied include detailed population change from 1990 to 2000, changes in employment from 1990 to 2000, and an assessment of the change in the land cover between 1992 and 2002, based on what was located on the land in those two years, such as farm uses, vegetation, and residential, business and industrial uses. A fourth factor that will be studied is the planning currently in place in the region in the form of zoning ordinances and land use plans.

The inventory started in September and is expected to be completed by mid-December. The GIS diagnostics program contracted with ECICOG in Cedar Rapids to conduct the inventory for the six counties that are part of ECICOG. The final report is expected to include 40 or more maps of all the changes that have occurred in the area and a regional land use map based on the existing plans.

**Outstanding Assessor**

Buena Vista County Deputy Assessor Kim M. Carnine was nominated and selected to receive the Outstanding Member Award by her peers at the Iowa State Assessors Annual Conference and School of Instruction held in West Des Moines October 23-25. The recipient of this award is selected based on leadership qualities, professionalism and contribution of time and effort to the association. Kim’s hard work and dedication to her profession are greatly appreciated by her fellow members in the state of Iowa.

Kim began working in the Buena Vista Assessors office in July 1977 and was appointed Deputy Assessor in March 1979. Kim has served on a variety of Iowa State Assessor Association committees during her career, always giving extra effort to serve the membership. Kim is a member of International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) and is a Certified General Appraiser in the State of Iowa.
Thank You To Outgoing County Officials

ISAC would like to take this time to recognize the following county officials who have retired within the last six months, who decided not to run for re-election or who were defeated in the election. ISAC would like to thank you for your service and dedication to county government. Good luck in the future and keep in contact through ISAC’s Alumni Program!

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NACo is One of Nation’s Top Nine Associations

By: Jim Philipps, NACo Media Relations Manager

Veteran NACo members have long known that their dues and active participation have contributed immeasurably to the growth and effectiveness of an outstanding advocacy organization. Now, that observation has been validated by a new four-year study from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

NACo was one of nine “remarkable” associations selected to be a part of a study to determine why successful associations thrive. The results of the study were released in a new book, *7 Measures of Success - What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don’t*, at ASAE’s Annual Conference in Boston.

NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake attended the conference to receive the honor and met with renowned author Jim Collins, who was the mentor and research advisor for the project and book. Collins is best known for writing such business bestsellers as *Built to Last* and *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the LeapÉ And Others Don’t*.

After polling 1,000 nonprofit CEOs on their top five choices of nonprofits in the U.S., ASAE compiled a list of the 506 most mentioned associations. ASAE researchers then analyzed the responses and narrowed the list to the top 104, which were invited to participate in the next phase of the study.

After four years of data analysis, several indicators of success were discovered that differentiated the good organizations from the remarkable ones. Nine remarkable associations, including NACo, were then selected for in-depth study and featured at length in the book.

The researchers found that truly exceptional associations - and other nonprofit organizations for that matter - share a dogged commitment to seven key factors, or measures, that define their ability to remain remarkable year after year after year. They don’t so much subscribe to certain qualities as they embody these 7 Measures of Success:

- A Customer Service Culture
- Alignment of Products and Services with Mission
- Data-Driven Strategies
- Dialog and Engagement
- The CEO as a Broker of Ideas
- Organizational Adaptability, and
- Alliance Building

There were a number of references made to NACo in the book as examples of why NACo was considered remarkable by the researchers. For example, the authors wrote that remarkable associations view members as a population to serve rather than a market to sell to.

The author wrote, “In fact, they reject out-of-hand a product or service that fails to directly aid their members, even if it might generate revenue. The National Association of Counties (NACo) is one organization that is completely driven by its commitment to meet member needs.”

The book further cited the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (GPA) as one of NACo’s success stories. GPA grew out of the recognition that counties are chronically short of money. NACo cosponsors the alliance with several other government associations. It enables local government agencies to aggregate their purchasing power and obtain volume pricing on office supplies, technology products, janitorial supplies, park equipment and other supplies.

“NACo,” the author wrote, “probably could have crafted a group purchasing arrangement on a much smaller scale, such as a typical affinity services program. Doing so, however, would have reduced the organization’s effectiveness in meeting its mission.”

In 2004, GPA registered more than $500 million in sales and saved local governments an estimated 20 percent on purchases through the program.

The author also cited NACo’s regular “County 101” sessions with staff as an effective way to help ensure that everyone is clear about what (our) members do,” and detailed how the association dug out of a financial crisis in the early 1990s and took steps to guard against future serious fiscal difficulties.

Other remarkable associations cited in the book include AARP, the American Dental Association, the Associated General Contractors of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants, Radiological Society of North America and Society for Human Resources Management.

For more information on “The 7 Measures of Success,” visit [www.asaecenter.org](http://www.asaecenter.org).
New Accounting Requirements For Retiree Benefits

The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has issued new standards for reporting other post employment benefits (OPEB) and termination benefits. Traditionally, counties offering these types of benefits have reported them on a “pay-as-you-go” basis. Under the new standards, counties may find that they will be required to report the long-term actuarial cost of these benefits. The following Q & A is intended to provide an overview of the new standards and their potential impact.

Q: What is the purpose of these new requirements?
A: Many governments provide benefits to former employees or their beneficiaries as compensation for services while they were employees. The liability for these benefits, called OPEB, has not been required to be reported by governments in the past, even though the liability (future amount owed) may be significant to the governmental entity. GASB Statement 45 requires governments to report the OPEB liability. Most governments are already reporting a liability for termination benefits. However, GASB Statement 47 provides additional clarification on how and when to record the liability.

NOTE: GASB does not and cannot require governments to “fund” the OPEB liability. Each government will make its own decision as to whether or how to fund the OPEB liability.

Q: What is the difference between OPEB and termination benefits?
A: OPEB benefits are provided to retirees as “compensation” for employee services. OPEB may include pensions; health insurance and healthcare benefits; dental, vision and/or life insurance; legal services and there may be other types of benefits provided that qualify as OPEB. In contrast, termination benefits are provided as an inducement to hasten termination and may include early retirement incentives or severance benefits.

Q: Will most counties have an OPEB liability?
A: Most Iowa governments, including counties, will have a pre-existing OPEB as a result of Iowa Code §509A.13. This statute creates an implicit rate subsidy resulting in a pre-existing OPEB for the county. This section states:

“If a governing body (county) has procured for its employees accident, health, or hospitalization insurance, or a medical service plan, or has contracted with a health maintenance organization to do business in this state, the governing body shall allow its employees who retired before attaining 65 years of age to continue participation in the group plan or under the group contract at the employee’s own expense until the employee attains 65 years of age.”

Q: What does “implicit rate subsidy” mean?
A: GASB defines implicit rate subsidy as “the de facto subsidy of retirees by permitting them to pay lower than age-adjusted premiums through the use of a single common or blended premium for both retirees and active employees.” In simpler terms, premiums for retirees normally will be higher than premiums for active employees. However, most governments “average” this cost resulting in the same premium for both active and retired employees. The additional cost of including the retired employees results in an implicit rate subsidy, which must be recognized as an OPEB liability.

Q: Is an actuarial valuation required to calculate the OPEB liability?
A: For plans with total membership of 200 or more, an actuarial valuation (opinion) must be acquired at least biennially. For plans with total membership of less than 200, an opinion must be acquired at least triennially. For plans with total membership of less than 100, an alternative measurement method is allowed.

Q: How do I determine plan membership?
A: Include employees in active service (those that will draw a benefit from the plan), terminated employees who have accumulated benefits but are not yet receiving them and retired employees and beneficiaries of deceased retirees currently receiving benefits. Do not include beneficiaries of living retirees since these are already included.

Q: What should I be doing now to be prepared?
A: Depending on your implementation requirements (phase-in period described below), counties should be gathering information to evaluate whether they have OPEB and/or termination benefits. Information could include, but is not limited to, policies for early retirement incentives; severance packages; minutes; memos; correspondence and other forms and documents pertaining to benefits. These should be gathered, evaluated and documented to determine whether your county has OPEB, termination benefits or both.

Q: When are these statements effective?
A: All counties must implement these new requirements. The compliance requirements for GASB Statements 43 and 45 are dependent on the size of the county’s revenues in FY00. These are consistent with the implementation criteria used for GASB Statement 34.

GASB Statement 43: Phase I: Total annual revenues exceeding $100 million – FYE 2007; Phase II: Total annual revenues in excess of $10 million but less than $100 million – FYE 2008; Phase III: Total annual revenues less than $10 million – FYE 2009
GASB Statement 45: Phase I: Total annual revenues exceeding $100 million – FYE 2008; Phase II: Total annual revenues in excess of $10 million but less than $100 million – FYE 2009; Phase III: Total annual revenues less than $10 million – FYE 2010
GASB Statement 47 was effective as of June 30, 2006.

Q: What if I’m not sure or have questions about these requirements?
A: Your independent auditors will review your documentation and determination during the audit. If you have questions or need assistance with implementation of these accounting standards, you should contact your auditor for assistance and guidance.
State Agency Without Accountability

This is a guest editorial. The opinions expressed are solely that of the author.

The 2006 election allowed voters to respond to what they perceived as the wrong course for America. In the state of Iowa, an agency continues to take its own course without regard to local circumstances or costs. This course is irresponsible and wrong.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is a state agency without accountability. It is striving to accumulate control and power, and is not interested in cooperating to solve problems in an efficient, cost-effective manner. The actions of IDNR, if permitted to continue, will negatively impact all of Iowa’s counties.

The IDNR is making a case of rural churches, for example. Most rural churches have their own private well that supplies water to the facility. By code, these wells remain a private water system unless the volume of individuals using the water increases to a certain standard. This standard specifies that when there are either 15 water hookups or at least 25 individuals who use the facility’s water per day for at least 60 days a year, the well will be classified as a public water supply.

The IDNR is contacting rural churches. They do not ask how many connections have been made on a well or how many individuals use the water each day of the year. Rather, the IDNR asks, “On average, how many people attend your church service every week?”

If the response is 25 or over, the IDNR mails paperwork to the church and directs them to complete and return it. The IDNR cover letter states that the church must have this permit, which will only cost $25 if taken out in the next 120 days or so. If taken out later, it will cost $125. The IDNR does not point out that receiving the permit will result in the church being classified as a public water supply. The letter does not include the rules and standards that must be met for such classification.

Faith Lutheran Church in Mitchell learned that their church is now listed as a public water supply. After that, they discovered that their church did not even meet the definition of a public water supply. Therefore Faith asked the IDNR to have their church reclassified. The IDNR refused. They cited their policy stating that Faith has the potential to have more than 25 people per day for more than 60 days a year use the water. According to that, the IDNR says that Faith is a public water supply.

Potential? Where in the Iowa Code or Administrative Law has the word potential been added? Something is seriously wrong when an agency like the IDNR can enforce a policy based on alleged potential use.

The rural Iowa speed limit is 55 mph. If a Corvette is going 55 mph, does a patrolman have the right to pull over this Corvette and issue a speeding ticket for driving 70 miles per hour over the limit just because the Corvette has the potential to go 125 mph?

Other unreasonable policies have been established and implemented by the IDNR. A few years ago, the IDNR implemented a rule stating that if a half-acre acre of soil is disturbed, a storm water permit is needed. This permit costs $300 for three years. The permit does not just expire at the end of that time. IDNR rules state that the permit will automatically renew. If the holder wants to discontinue it, then the permit holder must request an application to request discontinuance. Once this application is completed and sent to the IDNR, the IDNR will decide if the permit will be allowed to expire.

The IDNR is not attempting to cooperate with industry to resolve issues. One example is air quality. A factory may have to meet certain air quality standards for emissions discharge. The IDNR air samples, however, will include dust emitted from traffic on a public gravel road hundreds of feet from the site and thereby out of the industry’s control. Furthermore, Iowa landfills have apparently been informed by the IDOT that if they have a choice, they must operate under proposed changes to regulations, not under present Iowa law.

What or who has given the IDNR so much authority? Most of this comes from administrative law that is written by the IDNR to regulate itself. If the Legislature continues to allow departments to write their own administrative laws, further abuses will inevitably occur. Iowa counties should be very concerned at the direction of the IDNR, and they should demand more responsible, effective oversight of this agency.

Mills County is seeking qualified candidates for the position of county engineer. Qualified candidates must be licensed as a professional engineer in Iowa and must possess a working knowledge of the maintenance and construction of roads; land surveying, subdivision and zoning administration, and flood zone management. Salary is negotiable based upon the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. Interested candidates should forward a current resume and salary expectations to: Mills County Board of Supervisors, %Mills County Auditor, 418 Sharp Street, Glenwood, IA 51534. Resumes will be accepted until 4:30pm on December 15. Mills County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
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New County Officers School
January 17-18

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DECEMBER
5-7 Engineers Conference
(Scheman Center, Ames)
7 District II Winter Meeting
(Elks Lodge, Charles City)
7 CCMS NE Support Group
(Chaff’s Restaurant, New Hampton)
8 Annual Drainage Conference
(Starlite, Fort Dodge)
13 District IV Winter Meeting
(Griswold Community Center, Griswold)
13-15 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
15 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
20 ISAC Staff Retreat - ISAC Office Closed
25-26 ISAC Office Closed

JANUARY
8 CCMS Training Committee (ISAC Office)
9 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
17-18 New County Officers School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
19 Statewide Supervisors Conference
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
19 CCMS Board Meeting
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
26 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

FEBRUARY
9 ISAC Executive Board Meeting (ISAC Office)
22-23 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

MARCH
3-7 NACo Legislative Conference
(Washington DC)
18-20 ISAC Spring School of Instruction
(Marriott/Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)
28-30 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)

APRIL
10 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
11 CCMS Cost Report Training
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
27 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

MAY
9-11 Treasurers Conference (Clinton)
10 CCMS Advanced Case Managers
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)

Please visit ISAC’s online calendar of events at www.iowacounties.org and click on ‘Upcoming Events.’ A listing of all the meetings scheduled thus far in 2006 & 2007, agendas and meeting notices can be found on ISAC’s website. A majority of ISAC’s meetings offer online registration. If you have any questions about the meetings listed above, please contact Jerri Noboa at (515) 244-7181 or jnoboa@iowacounties.org.
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